Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

National Institute of
Environmental Health Sciences

Norse Greenland settlement: Reflections on climate change, trade, and the contrasting fates of human settlements in the North Atlantic Islands

Abstract:

Changing economies and patterns of trade, rather than climatic deterioration, could have critically marginalized the Norse Greenland settlements and effectively sealed their fate. Counter-intuitively, the end of Norse Greenland might not be symptomatic of a failure to adapt to environmental change, but a consequence of successful wider economic developments of Norse communities across North Atlantic. Data from Greenland, the Faroe Islands, and medieval Iceland is used to explore the interplay of Norse society with climate, environment, settlement, and other circumstances. Long term increases in vulnerability caused by economic change and cumulative climate changes sparked a cascading collapse of integrated interdependent settlement systems, bringing the end of Norse Greenland.

Resource Description

Exposure : ☒

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

 Extreme Weather Event, Food/Water Security, Human Conflict/Displacement

   Extreme Weather Event: Landslides

Geographic Feature: ☒

resource focuses on specific type of geography

 Arctic

Geographic Location: ☒

resource focuses on specific location

 Non-United States

   Non-United States: Non-U.S. North America

Health Impact: ☒

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

 Health Outcome Unspecified

Mitigation/Adaptation: ☒

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation

Resource Type: ☒

format or standard characteristic of resource

Research Article

Resilience: ☒

capacity of an individual, community, or institution to dynamically and effectively respond or adapt to shifting climate impact circumstances while continuing to function

A focus of content

Timescale: ☒

time period studied

Historical